

A PILOT STUDY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

Davaajav Purevjav *, **Edit Katalin Molnár ****

** Doctoral School of Educational Sciences, University of Szeged*

*** Institute of Education, University of Szeged*

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Teachers' professional knowledge is regarded as a determining factor in the quality of school systems all over the world. Formal in-service teacher training (IST) can significantly contribute to improving this knowledge only if its curriculum addresses areas relevant to the stakeholders and uses methods useful for participants, and also if its implementation is appropriately monitored. This presentation focuses on a country, Mongolia, where the importance of IST is recognized, but its practice is not evidence-based yet. A pilot study was carried out to identify the opinions of Mongolian teachers and IST trainers regarding IST and to collect information for creating a tool appropriate for needs assessment. The small sample included 10 trainers from the governmental IST institute and 50 teachers who attended an IST session the year before. The development of the instrument began with a study of models of teacher knowledge and competences, as well as standards for the teaching profession. From this, a list of 20 items describing teacher knowledge was created. Five questions were posed aiming at issues ranging from present knowledge levels of teachers to changes resulting from IST. For each question, respondents had to rate the teacher knowledge components on a five point Likert scale. A sixth question targeted methods of learning and instruction. A seventh, open-ended question asked for comments on the questionnaire. Anonymous, on-line data collection took place in 2015. Experiences and results related to the development of the instrument included awareness of cultural, conceptual and linguistic issues to be resolved. Still, respondents found the questionnaire valid. The pilot data also provided an opportunity to compare the opinions of the two sub-samples. Teachers generally believed their present knowledge levels to be higher (e.g. in the cases of motivating students to learn or using ICT in education, $p < .05$). Trainers thought knowledge and skills related to educational and social psychology to be more important in everyday practice ($p < .05$). The former proved to be the only significant difference when rating teacher improvement needs. Suggestions for teacher knowledge components to include in IST sessions were similar in the two groups. A factor analysis revealed that teachers' self reported changes due to IST participation fell into two factors, and were more tangible in components related to practical, instructional activities than those involving more explicit reflection. As regards methods of learning and instruction, several significant differences emerged between teachers' and trainers' ratings of effectiveness. The developmental process and the information from the questionnaire gave an insight into the tasks of utilizing international findings, ideas and procedures in a national context. They also created the basis of a large scale survey to provide a nationally representative data base for policy and curriculum development.

K1